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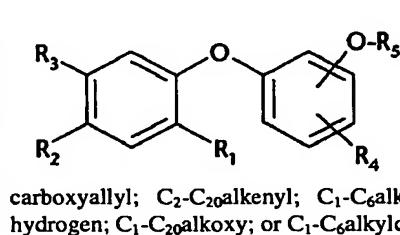
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(I)

(57) Abstract: The use of hydroxydiphenyl ether compounds of formula (I), wherein R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub> and R<sub>3</sub> are each independently of the others hydrogen; hydroxy; C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>20</sub>alkyl; hydroxy-substituted C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>20</sub>alkyl; C<sub>5</sub>-C<sub>7</sub>cycloalkyl; C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>20</sub>alkoxy; C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>alkylcarbonyl; phenyl; or phenyl-C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>3</sub>alkyl; R<sub>4</sub> is hydrogen, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>20</sub>alkyl; hydroxy-substituted C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>20</sub>alkyl; C<sub>5</sub>-C<sub>7</sub>cycloalkyl; hydroxy; formyl; acetyl; allyl; carboxy; carboxy-C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>3</sub>alkyl; carboxyallyl; C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>20</sub>alkenyl; C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>alkylcarbonyl; C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>3</sub>alkylcarbonyl-C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>3</sub>alkyl; phenyl; or phenyl-C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>3</sub>alkyl; and R<sub>5</sub> is hydrogen; C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>20</sub>alkoxy; or C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub>alkylcarbonyl; as melanogenesis inhibitors and for lightening the skin.